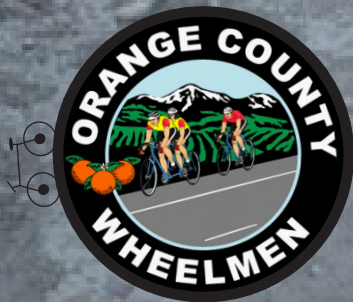




# **Chain Reaction**

**Winter 2023**

**A Quarterly Publication of the Orange County Wheelmen**



# OCW CLUB LINKS

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HOME PAGE: [www.ocwheelmen.org](http://www.ocwheelmen.org)

CALENDAR: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar)

OFFICERS: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020)

EVENTS: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map)

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-support-members](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-support-members)

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

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Check website for location, day and time. All Officers and Directors are expected to attend. Other interested members may also attend.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

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Held typically the first Thursday every other month at Irvine Ranch Water District, Sand Canyon Ave. in the city of Irvine. Light dinner starting at 6:30pm with meeting starting at 7pm. Different speaker each meeting.

## REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

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All Registration for OCW events require the registrant to be logged in. Be sure to always check for discount codes. You will only see the discount code if you are a current member of OCW. The discount code if applicable will be located on a separate page in the specific event area. To confirm if you are current, check the membership data base. If you do not see the link for the membership data base, your membership has expired by at least a month or more.

The new website, registration code, and discount codes are only visible to current members. Our website constantly updates new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. The website continually upgrades to protect your personal information along with having it available for our members to connect to each other.

**Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW!**

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## ON THE COVER

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Picture provided by Kevin and Ximena Ansel. For the story behind this picture please go to page 8.

## Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

As I am writing this it is raining outside. This is supposed to be one of about three continuous storms we are expecting here in Orange County. Although it's keeping Alan and I from mountain bike riding and hiking, this weather is much needed in So Cal. When it rains we like to take long, about eight-mile, walks through the hilly neighborhoods of Yorba Linda to get in our exercise. What do you do when it rains? That might make a good article for the spring edition! Just something to think about.

Wow, another edition of Chain Reaction with some outstanding articles from our members. It's because of those contributions that Chain Reaction has lasted so many years.

Thank you to all who contributed articles in 2022, and I look forward to all the upcoming articles in 2023!

Happy New Year!





**Steve Loughran**

# The President

Well, reflecting on the past three years as president of OCW is really stretching my ever-aging brain. I feel like this is in some ways, a state-of-the-club essay. So much has happened during this period of all our lives. Most of our lives have been changed in some ways. A cancelled vacation, cancelled family gatherings, cancelled schooling/classes and so on. Well, OCW has not escaped the impact of the past few years as well. Many members have found their own “pod” to ride with and we see fewer members joining our rides as well as a decrease in membership.

OCW however continues to be a great group to belong to. We have rides every day of the week except Mondays. We now have four supported metrics per year. If you price outside metrics you will find that your annual dues are well spent by belonging to OCW. Larry Locken has converted over 600 of our routes to downloadable formats: GPX, TCX. That alone is a phenomenal accomplishment and was a goal for me when I started as president. We also have a Ride with GPS club account and a Strava club account that Larry manages. So, there has been a lot of activities and accomplishments over the past three years that may or may not be all that apparent to members.

There is also a lot of work behind the scenes that must happen to keep the club functioning. Tony Perez, our website administrator has been amazingly supportive in putting out emails and announcements. He has put together all our events in terms of registrations and coordination from a web standpoint. He has been invaluable to me in coordinating all the activities of the club.

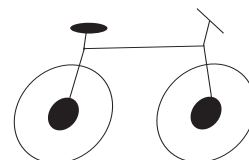
Jim Walker continues as club treasurer. Irene continues to manage our membership. They have been

in these positions as long as I have been in the club; over 15 years!! Not only this, they are active in almost every other club activity; they are at registration for our metrics, organizing and cleaning out our storage shed, and present at many of our weekly rides.

Bob Fairfield continues to be active in club activities and lead our Saturday rides. Monica McCarthy has acted as secretary over the past two years. She has an incredible knack for coming up with solutions to many of our club issues. Both are very active in all aspects of club activities. Other members of the board are very active in ensuring that the business of the club gets done and I cannot thank them enough.

Of late, we have changed the bylaws of the club to reduce the size of the board. These have been approved by the membership. Other members include Art Pressel, Alan Dager (recently resigned), Harry Gunther (clothing), Lee Stebbins (just about everything), Burt Ohlig (Vice President), Jim Pugh (statistics), Michelle Vester (our editor for our wonderful newsletter, Chain Reaction) and Alan Vester (leader of our off-road group, Goat Hill). These people have ensured the ongoing business of our club so chapeau to each and every one.

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and all the best in the new year. I hope that we continue to enjoy cycling and can bring more new riders into the fold.



# WORD SEARCH

WORDS CAN BE FOUND FORWARD, BACKWARD AND DIAGONAL

W	F	H	X	Q	U	I	O	O	V	C	D	Y	K	U
Z	T	N	O	R	T	H	P	O	L	E	V	R	U	V
X	W	A	G	Z	W	M	E	P	N	R	B	F	M	N
B	H	M	R	I	O	Z	U	Y	P	E	A	C	E	H
H	O	P	I	Q	N	O	E	L	U	E	O	L	R	G
G	L	R	N	D	S	G	P	O	I	D	I	K	R	F
F	L	E	C	H	J	I	E	L	K	N	U	M	Y	C
C	Y	E	H	X	C	F	F	R	R	I	T	L	S	S
E	R	H	T	G	G	T	H	L	B	E	D	E	X	N
J	O	C	R	S	B	S	N	M	V	R	G	G	C	O
I	L	A	G	A	Y	S	X	D	C	E	E	N	V	W
N	N	S	B	N	V	O	I	U	T	R	L	A	B	M
G	B	X	M	T	T	Y	T	S	O	R	F	T	D	A
L	W	R	E	A	T	H	S	E	W	S	M	U	N	N
E	V	P	E	P	P	E	R	M	I	N	T	I	M	Q



REINDEER	HOLLY	MERRY	GINERBREAD
NOEL	ELF	SANTA	JINGLE
SNOW	GIFTS	NORTHPOLE	SNOWMAN
PEPPERMINT	GRINCH	CHEER	PEACE
FROSTY	ANGEL	WREATH	TOYS

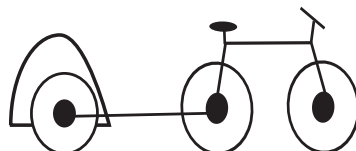
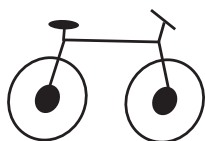
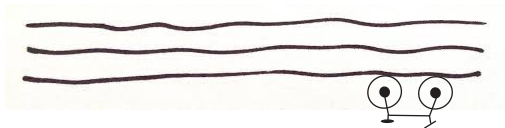
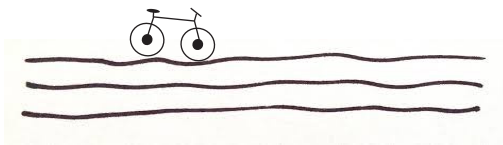
 Find the solved puzzle at the back of this issue



# Find all the bikes!

There are SEVERAL "stick figure" bikes, including the ones below, all throughout this issue. Can you find them?

The answer is on the bottom of page 26. Did your numbers match??





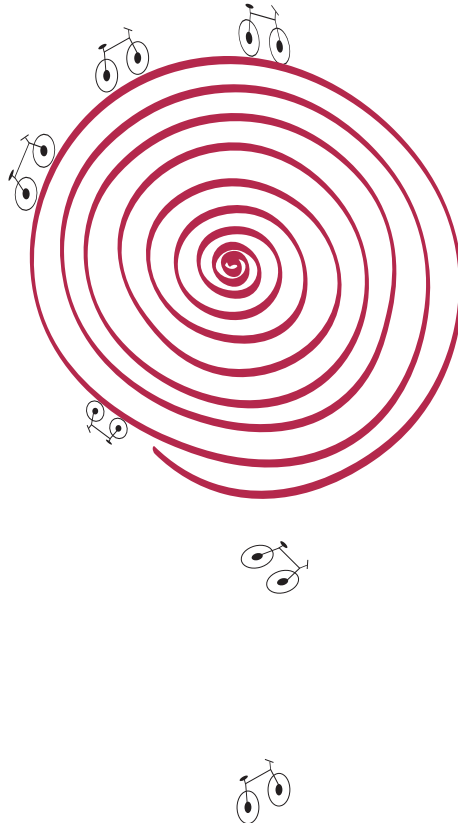
# the *VICE* President's Message

**By Bert Ohlig, Vice President**

One of the responsibilities of the vice president is to obtain speakers for the general meeting. Speakers can be related to cycling in all sorts of ways that interest our members. Bike racing, bikepacking, distance riding, mechanics, sales, etc. There are endless cycling-related jobs or disciplines in which someone would make an interesting speaker.

Do you know of someone? Or, you may be that person! Let me know. You can reach me at:

[bohlig@olec.com](mailto:bohlig@olec.com)





# The Most Diverse Bicycle Club in Orange County



## Come Ride with Us!



## A Cross-Country Bicycle Tour

By Kevin and Ximena Ansel

The three of us, Kevin, Ximena, and Joe, headed north out of Seattle to start a cross-country bicycle tour to Boston. Joining the Northern Tier Route in Sedro Wooley, Washington, we made our way over the Cascade mountains. Even though it was June, the weather did not cooperate. It rained all day as we rode over Washington Pass.

A few days later, while heading up Sherman Pass, we were caught in a summer snowstorm. The wind was blowing, and the temperature dropped below freezing. A snow plow passed us as we made our way up the mountain. At the summit, a blizzard blew in, dumping six inches of snow on the pass. Luckily, a rancher and his wife, in a large flatbed truck, pulled over and asked if we wanted a ride down the mountain. Our hands were frozen, and we didn't think we could brake or shift safely, so



we took them up on their offer. The 'trail angels' were watching over us.

We continued across Washington and Idaho to Whitefish, Montana. After visiting Glacier National Park, we headed south to Missoula, Montana. Joe's wife had arranged for him to throw out the first pitch at the Paddleheads Minor League baseball game. That was a fun experience.

From Missoula, we rode 300 miles south to Yellowstone National Park. Luckily for us, Yellowstone had just reopened the West and East Gates after heavy rains and flooding. It kept us from having to do a 280-mile detour around the park. Yellowstone was beautiful as we arrived for the July 4th weekend. We were lucky to get a cabin because tent camping was restricted due to aggressive bear activity.



Leaving Yellowstone, we traveled east towards Cody, Wyoming. After riding over the Big Horn Mountains, we made our way to Devils Tower National Monument. It was incredible to camp at the base of this awe-inspiring geological feature.

Entering South Dakota, we made our way through the Black Hills, and were lucky enough to ride on the Mickelson Hall of Fame Rail Trail. We continued to the town of Keystone. Joe's family flew in and met us, so we took a couple of days off. We took time to tour Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse National Monument, Custer State Park, and the town of Deadwood. Deadwood is a western town full of history. It was a wild town with a lawless reputation. It attained notoriety when Wild Bill Hickock was killed on August 2, 1876. He and Calamity Jane are buried in the cemetery above town.

The temperature heated up as we headed east. Travelling into the town of Wall, South Dakota it was 101 degrees. Camping made for some hot sticky nights. Halfway through South Dakota, we entered the prairies and grasslands. There were wheat fields as far as the eye could see. The terrain also flattened out. Entering Minnesota, we rode along hundreds of miles of corn and soybeans fields. Our route took us through the backroads of small farming towns. Many of these communities only had a convenience store, which limited our food choices. Supermarkets were few and far between. It was a treat when we found a place that sold salads. We camped in several city parks in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Most had bathrooms and showers and cost only \$10 per night. We had a great time talking to the locals. Every day someone would ask what we were doing, where we started, where we were going, how many pounds our bikes weighed, and how long we had been on the road. We happily answered all their questions. By the way, our bikes and gear weighed 80 pounds.

After completing our journey across Wisconsin, we ended up on the shores of Lake Michigan. We booked a ferry ride on the SS Badger which took us across the lake to the town of Ludington, Michigan.





It was a choppy 4-hour boat ride where half of the people on the ferry were seasick. Ximena was a little queasy and was glad when we reached shore. The landscape in Michigan was similar to the previous states. There were small towns and miles of crops. It was wonderful to see so much open land and space between towns. In the town of Algonac, Michigan we caught another ferry. This time we crossed the St. Clair River into Ontario, Canada. Ontario was very flat and there were days when we climbed only 700 feet in 60 miles. Because of this, we flew through Canada. The Canadians were just as friendly and inquisitive as the people in the U.S. We followed the shore of Lake Erie until we crossed back into the United States in Buffalo, New York.

places to camp, so we stayed in hotels. As it turned out, there were several rainy nights, so we were glad to be dry in our hotel rooms. The route took us through some larger cities such as Rochester, Syracuse, and Schenectady. After being in prairies and farmland for so long, these large cities were a shock to bicycle through.

Leaving New York, we entered Massachusetts, our tenth and final state. As we cross the border into Massachusetts, we climbed the Berkshire Mountains. They were not as difficult as the mountains in the West, but they were still challenging. Massachusetts was a beautiful state with lush green forests. We were lucky to find a few other long bike trails to



In Buffalo we rode on the iconic Erie Canal Trail. This trail is a mix of pavement, gravel, and dirt that parallels the Erie Canal for 360 miles to Albany, New York. We rode through more small towns but there were not many

ride. The roads in Massachusetts were in terrible shape, with potholes, cracks, and large expansion joints due to the cold, snowy winters. Bike lanes were also limited.



The final statistics for the tour are: 3918 miles averaging 53 miles per day, 86 days including 10 days off for rest and sight-seeing, and 126,000 vertical feet of climbing. 95,000 feet were in the first 2,000 miles. We stopped at approximately 40 Museums, National Parks, Monuments, points of interest, and attractions across ten states. We met countless friendly, kind, and generous people. There were jaw-dropping beautiful landscapes, forests, and open land. We saw wildlife such as bald eagles, osprey, elk, deer, antelope, bison, a black bear, marmots, prairie dogs, snakes, and turtles. And we only got chased by a few country dogs.

To see more photos and videos from our tour, go to our blog at <https://www.anseladventures.com/anseladventures/categories/cross-country-2022> and our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@anseladventures>. I hope this inspires you to get out and try a tour of your own. We guarantee you won't regret it. Until next time...







## Or Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo Which Comes to Mind for Some Reason

By Peter Gerrard

*(This story first appeared in [Citric Acid](#), An On-line Orange County Literary Arts Quarterly of Imagination and Re-imagination)*

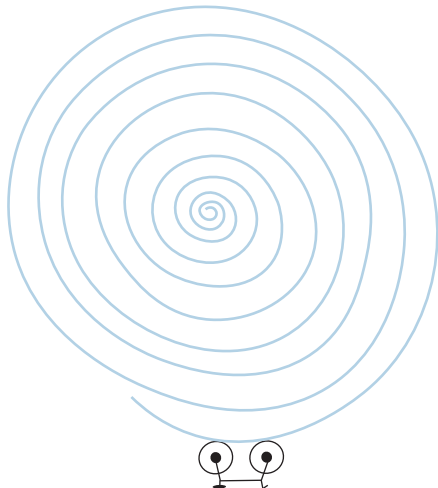
...a sudden clarity and focus follows the attention-grabbing realization that things are not right and maybe you're going too fast or not in control even though you've negotiated this particular left turn on the bike trail underpassing Alton Parkway hundreds of times (later you will do the math and realize it's closer to a thousand) and even though (following a test pilot's Plan A) you lean and brake it isn't enough and you go to Plan B which means going into the drops for more leverage but it only takes a millisecond to know that's

not enough either and Plan C is do you lay it over or try and bounce off the post-and cable fence bordering the drop into the rocks of the wash and that bouncing seems the best option but it isn't there's an ejection and you're airborne launched like a pinball part of your mind aware of the sound your bike makes clattering skidding sliding away from you and down the trail and an impact unlike anything you've ever felt your vision can't keep up with the warp speed acceleration into another dimension and then "Wham, Bam, Thank You, Ma'am" you're stopped but you can't see straight except to hazily establish now you're facing away from the wash and its rocks your Oakleys are gone the sun is scorching your retinas you're in a squat position and when you try and straighten you can't as you're

somehow attached to the post and cables but you can't see how or why as you're being interrogated by the merciless sunlight that makes you squint and close your eyes except for brief glances that reveal your right glove's caught on a bolt which you yank free but your jersey's burrowed more deeply in a fitting and won't tug away so the obvious solution is to tear at it, it rips with a sharp complaint and you are not constrained but as you try and rise up to take pressure off where the cable's cutting into your abdomen you can't your right leg feels snapped mid-femur and three tries are three strikes and you're out and not moving seems a good idea but unsustainable because you're unsteady and now nothing's holding you from falling backwards and down into the rocks and while you wait for a solution to come to mind one presents itself as you hear a bike approaching from the direction you were headed and then the click of a shoe unclipping and a disembodied voice asks if you're ok and you can't come up with a snappy comeback except "Can I order a cheeseburger?" but you hear "Not really" (it's from you) and he tries to help you stand but you can't but he's big and strong enough to get you over or between the two cables and into the shaded sloping wall of the underpass where you excise your phone from the center back jersey pocket and you still can't see straight so you stab at a name on "RECENTS" and call your son instead of your wife and it goes to voice mail so you don't even know you've left a message with the wrong number and by habit you put the phone in what's left of your back jersey pocket and there's an ambulance people are asking questions and three of them hoist you onto a backboard and then onto a gurney and you say you need your bike and by the way where are my sunglasses I think they went into the wash and one of the responders sees them in the rocks and retrieves them as you're being loaded into the back of the ambulance and you say (more urgently than regarding your glasses) putting your foot down (metaphorically as you are on your back and you couldn't stand anyway) that your bike has to come along and some voice says "I don't know how to get the front wheel off" and the instructional part of your

brain explains about thru axles and that you need a 5mm Allen wrench and there's one in the saddle bag but it's as if you're speaking in tongues no one is listening and you hear a radio button toggle chirp and someone says "Transporting patient to Mission Hospital" and you try to explain that you're a Kaiser patient which is a block away and you say it again and then someone explains that you need a trauma center and Kaiser isn't it while someone says "The bike's inside" and the rear door closes EMTs are asking if it's ok to cut your jersey and shorts off you while tapping an IV into your right arm and asking if you need any pain meds to which you say either "Yes" or "That's a good idea" there's poking in your left arm and when you open your eyes after realizing you didn't have to be in the dark you see four bright round lights in a white ceiling and a brushed aluminum panel the size of a household wall plate but there's no electrical plugs just an unfamiliar fitting below "OXYGEN" all caps in red to the right of which is an IV bottle hanging on a stand then you feel the transmission engaging and the ambulance begins to lurch back up the ramp that you didn't negotiate siren winding up then wailing as you feel the rumble of tires speed speed speed there's your phone's ring tone and no one pays attention when you explain it's underneath you, pushing against your back in the pocket of what's left of your jersey, and you try again but maybe you're talking in tongues again NO ONE IS LISTENING and you want to assuage the concern of the unknown caller whose desperation and concern you can feel in the ringtone's sound and vibration as you don't want anyone to worry or think you're dead but they'll have to wait the ambulance is slowing and beeps backing up the door opens and there's new people and more round white lights it's suddenly cooler now and now there's new IV lines and a plethora of gauze and bandages and wraps accompanied by scrubbing and the redolence of disinfectant, portable X-Ray machines and pin prick lights seeing if your pupils work as the rest of your clothing and helmet socks and shoes are going going gone replaced by blankets "Get him scanned" and you're in motion again below more lights but they're not as antiseptically aggressive

then through a door and into a CT Scan machine which moves back and forth humming like bagpipes at a funeral you hope it's not Amazing Grace then you're back in motion and the lights change back to the round interrogation confessionals now there's new people who express concern about your knee "No, it's my femur" but maybe you're speaking in tongues again then you feel the parting of the Red Sea or Blue Sea of Scrubs and Moses is there with a name badge indicating he's the Main Trauma Doctor and he is saying you're mostly OK except for some worrisome issue with your intestine (old news) and maybe you're too old to be riding a bike, which is tough to counter with IVs in both arms and mostly naked on a gurney (there was a mention of Fentanyl a couple of times) but he's way out of line on that one you think and it's your first positive thought since failing to make that damn left turn and you notice your older son is standing there and you ask him what happened to your bike he says he found it outside the ER tagged with your name like it was a lost child at the airport and he's laughing as your errant garbled voice message made him think you'd crashed out on the Lizards trail in the Newport Coast Wilderness and were being airlifted while you (clearly) had said you're behind Blizzard in Irvine and now you're laughing, too, thinking, huh, Blizzard, they make games, and you'd metaphorically been the pinball in one the universe tilted and misplayed.





# The Hungry Cyclist



## Pastry-Wrapped Cranberry Baked Brie

Another wonderful appetizer that I always get compliments on, thanks to Tieghan Gerard at Half-Baked Harvest! You can get the recipe at <https://www.halfbakedharvest.com/pastry-wrapped-cranberry-baked-brie/>

### INGREDIENTS

#### CRANBERRY SAUCE

2 cups fresh cranberries  
1/2 cup orange juice  
1/4 cup maple syrup  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 pinch sea salt

#### BRIE

1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed  
1 8-12 ounce wheel of brie cheese  
2/3 cup toasted pecans, roughly chopped  
1 egg, beaten  
coarse sugar, for sprinkling

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. To make the cranberry sauce: in a medium pot, bring the cranberries, orange juice, maple syrup, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt to a boil over medium heat. Boil 10-15 minutes or until the cranberries burst and the sauce becomes jammy.
2. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
3. Lay the puff pastry flat on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Place the brie in the center of the pastry and remove a little of the rind from the top of the brie. I leave the rind on the bottom and sides intact. Spread the cranberry sauce over top and then sprinkle over the pecans. Fold the corners of the pastry over the brie. Brush the pastry with beaten egg and sprinkle lightly with sugar.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the pastry is deep golden brown.
5. EAT and enjoy with your favorite bread or crackers...or just with a spoon.





# Mountain Bike Dude

By Alan Vester

## Mountain and Gravel Bike Riding Geared Toward the 50+ Rider

### Product Review: *Get Your Priority Straight!* Part 1 of 2

I'm doing a bike review for the first time here in Chain Reaction. I purchased a 2022 Priority 600x Adventure Bike from Priority bike company located in New York City, New York in August of this year. It is direct to consumer, so there are no retail shops. The cost of the bike is \$3,500.00 plus shipping.

I'm more of a daily MTB trail rider than a bikepacking kind of guy. I may be trying some bikepacking in the future so I thought it would be fun to have a completely different type of bike than what I normally ride.

The Priority 600x does not have a conventional chain-type drivetrain like most of our road or mountain bikes. It has a Pinion 12-speed gear box and a Gates drive belt with front and rear cogs. Instead of having a rear derailleur to move a chain over different gears, it uses an inline belt and all the gear changes take place in the gear box which is located where the bottom bracket would be on most bikes.

The advantage of the gear box is, that it is not affected by rain, mud, snow or most elements because the gear box is sealed. There is a belt instead of a chain and if the belt gets mud or snow buildup, you can clean it off with water or a brush. The belt will last for years without replacement which makes it ideal for multi-day bikepacking trips because there is so little maintenance involved.



The Pinion gear box was developed in Germany by Porsche transmission engineers looking for a way to improve bicycle drivetrains. It is an amazing feat of engineering because they managed to make it a twelve-speed transmission and keep the weight down. Make no mistake, it does weigh more than a conventional chain-type drivetrain, but it is not brutally heavy.

The gear box uses a grip shift mechanism with two cables to handle both up and down shifts. You do have to momentarily pause between shifts, but since I've ridden a SRAM eagle drivetrain with a grip shift it presents no problem to me at all. The shifting is quiet and seamless. The gear box only needs to have an oil change about once every one or two years.

The frame is made of aluminum and comes with a Wren inverted fork and no rear suspen-

sion. The standard wheel set is WTB i35 wide rims and Goodyear 29 X 2.4 tires. The brakes are 4 piston Hayes Dominion, which I find have great stopping power and should handle a weighted-down bike with bikepacking gear on it just fine.

The bike is about 8 to 10 lbs. heavier than a normal mountain bike and the frame geometry is somewhat old school, but it is necessary to accommodate frame bags and gear. The bike comes with about 20 mounting bosses for racks, bags and water bottle cages. I have never seen a bike with soo many frame bolts for mountain accessories in my life.

I do give the bike high marks for the “fun factor” once it gets rolling, a very unique riding experience. It comes with a very comfortable Volt “Pure” model saddle. The handlebars are swept back and up more than any mountain bike handle I have ever ridden. It puts the rider in a more upright position and more comfortable for long rides.

The 600x was a joint project teaming Ryan Van Duzer (Youtuber) and Priority bikes. Ryan rode the Great Divide trail for 2700 miles performing the beta testing. He actually rode a prototype and after the journey they made some changes and tweaks for the better.

These are the positive things I like about the bike. Next article will cover a few items I was not so crazy about. I ride the bike about 3 times a month and next article I’ll have more to say about the Priority 600x since I will have put more miles and time in the saddle.

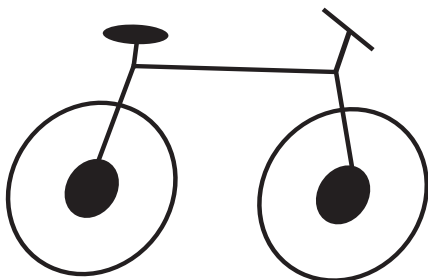


## Rules of the Trail

1. Ride open trails.
2. Leave No Trace.
3. Control your bicycle.
4. Yield appropriately.
5. Never scare animals.
6. Plan ahead.

**Alan Vester**

**Goat Hill Mountain Bike Dude**  
**ocwgoathill@gmail.com**





# Bob and Gloria's Arizona Autumn Adventure

By Gloria Nafel

We did a car-free vacation by bicycling to the Anaheim Amtrak Station and taking Metrolink to Union Station and then on to Tucson, Arizona. Although fully self-contained with camping gear, we did spend four nights in hotels, as well as, four nights camping. As usual, we were over zealous in our route planning: long days given the dirt roads, lots of elevation gain, and unknown road conditions. The weather was overall pleasant unless you count waking up to 34-degree weather and knowing you had a 1500' descent to ride. The trip was full of surprises: planned routes turned out to be unusable hiking trails, others had very deep sand, muddy creek crossings, rocky roads and truck convoys carrying empty containers to be used to build a border wall. We had offers from fellow travelers of dark beer, unique wildlife sightings

including a coatimundi and javelina, plus a variety of birds.

We visited Saguaro National Park and enjoyed the cactus but found some of the roads we had planned to use were not appropriate for our bike setup. We enjoyed fall colors as we rode through a couple of ecozones on Mt Lemmon, cactus to the pines.

At Madera Canyon, our forest campsite was one of the last available but Bob offered to let a late-arriving couple share our campsite. In exchange, they gave a couple of beers. This was a real luxury since transporting our food by bike, meant leaving alcohol behind. This is where we saw the coatimundi who seemed quite comfortable around people. The next day, we descended in the cold, climbed a

steep dirt road, and were glad to reach the pavement until we realized we had over 40 miles of highway before reaching Sierra Vista.



We had a layover day in Sierra Vista and had planned a 50-mile loop to Tombstone but as we were feeling rather dead ourselves, we stayed in town and took it easy. From there we went south, almost to the Mexican Border. We climbed to Coronado National Memorial and spent some time at the Visitor Center and found the RidewithGPS suggested route up Joe's Canyon was a hiking trail in the National Park and certainly not appropriate to ride on loaded touring bikes with slick tires. We continued on a dirt road to Montezuma Pass (6,575') and enjoyed spectacular views and kudos from hikers and drivers on our successful passage to the top on THOSE bikes. The Park Ranger said the other side of the pass was in better condition, not for us. It was pretty slow going between the rocky road and convoys of trucks working on the border wall.



Our campsite at Parker Canyon Lake was a gem with a lake view and a beautiful sunset. The next day we left early because we knew we would have a long day in the dirt with unknown conditions. We still had to traverse muddy sections, sandy soil, rocky roads, and

steep pitches, obviously more suited for unloaded mountain bikes with knobby tires. Before the last climb in the dirt, we took a lunch break and were amazed to see our camper friends from Madera Canyon out exploring. Bob accepted another beer to consume with lunch. We continued on the challenging road and made it to Patagonia Lake State Park without crashing and before dark!



Unlike our previous campsites, Patagonia Lake SP had a shower with the caveat that you had to push the button every 15 seconds. We checked all the showers, including the handicap stall to no avail. The next day we had planned a hardy dirt ride to a ghost town but decided we had had enough dirt and spent the day in Patagonia visiting a Hummingbird Center, seeing a javelina, and having a terrific lunch with fresh vegetables. This relatively easy day of 25 miles and 2000' was rewarded when fellow campers who are also cyclists, not only marveled at our tenacious abilities but offered to share some craft beer and conversation.



The last day was the longest ride covering about 78 miles and 3000'. We got the climbing over with early. We made a brownie stop in Sonoita and used the Old Highway followed by 20 miles of the Tucson Loop Bike Trail.



Total: 402 miles, 25,046', and 62 miles of dirt which felt like much more. Only one flat tire. As usual, our tour was challenging at times but very rewarding. In hindsight, Gloria wished she had her larger, knobby tires on her Ritchey. RidewithGPS did lead us astray at times despite looking at heatmaps, other riders' routes, and routing providing by RSWGPS. Dirt roads are always a risk because they vary depending on rain, recent grading, or a sudden influx of convoy trucks using the road. It was an amazing trip on less pedaled routes.

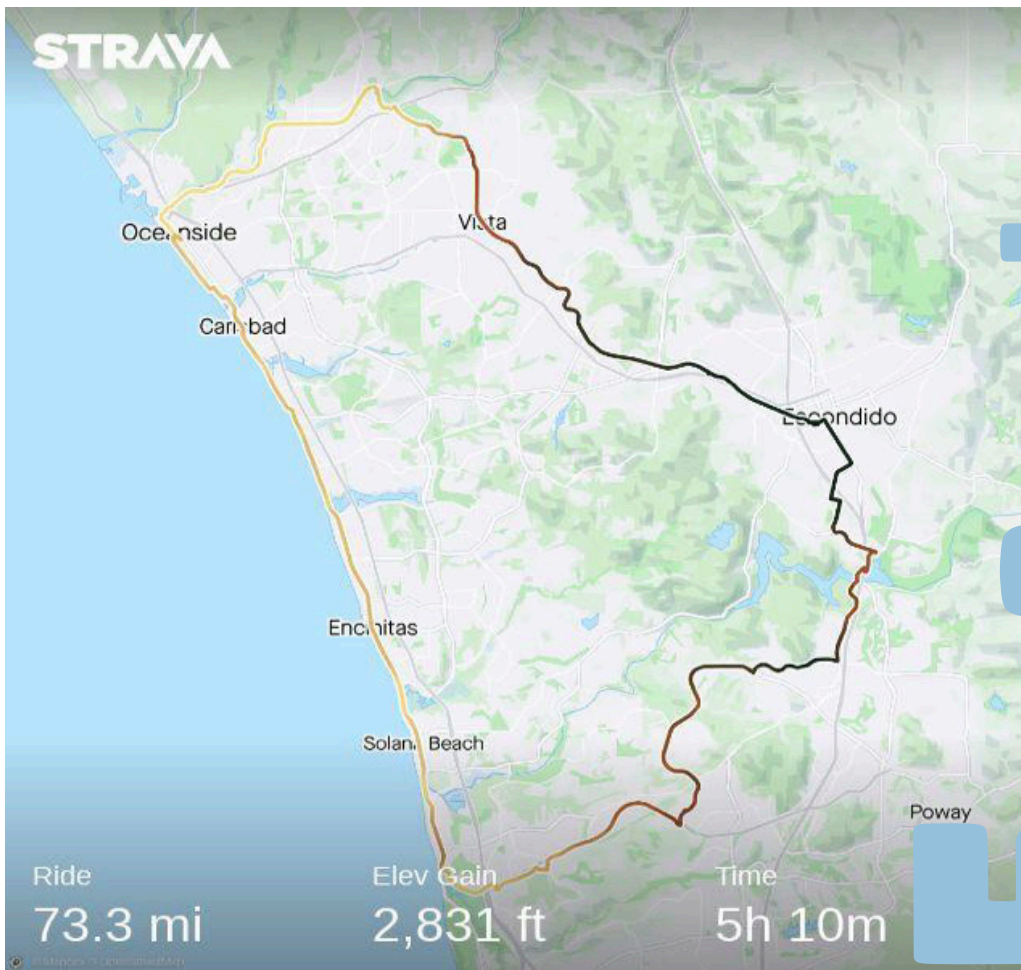


# WORD SEARCH

## SOLVED



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# 5th Sunday of the Month Remote

**By Dan Ignosci**

On Sunday, October 30, nine OCW members and guests met at the Oceanside Transit Center for a “Fifth Sunday of the Month Remote” loop around north San Diego County. This route was created to offer multiple ride choices for different fitness levels and as well as personal cycling experience. Riders had the option of riding twenty-five miles to Escondido and taking the Sprinter light rail back to Oceanside, ride an out and back from Oceanside to Escondido of fifty miles, ride sixty miles to Solana Beach and take the Coaster train to Oceanside or ride the entire seventy-three-mile loop. The ride details are viewable on Strava by clicking <https://www.strava.com/activities/8045206917>

The nine cyclists had never ridden this route before. I had been on each of the legs of the route at different times, but have never ridden the “whole enchilada”. Group rides, especially those over long distances, are always challenging due to many factors. Fitness lev-

els, terrain, the average speed of the riders, cycling experience, weather, etc., are all considerations that affect the enjoyment of each rider. We were fortunate that each of the riders in attendance looked after the welfare of each other throughout the ride.



To start we headed east toward Escondido on the San Luis Rey Trail and in Vista we hopped on the Inland Rail Trail. The San Luis Rey Trail is nine miles long and the Inland Rail Trail is ten and a half miles in length. At about twenty-five miles we stopped briefly at the Escondido Transit Center to use the restroom, refill water bottles, and eat some cycling snacks. Four cyclists decided to head back toward Oceanside at this time. Two returned on the same route and two opted to cycle back through the scenic Elfin Forest near Carlsbad, both routes amounted to a little more than fifty miles.



For those of us who moved ahead on the original route, we headed south toward Lake Hodges, which is on the border of Escondido and Rancho Bernardo. The picture below is our group of five as we were crossing the David Kreitzer Lake Hodges Bicycle Pedestrian Bridge, which is the world's longest stress ribbon bridge at a total length of 990 feet between abutments. For more information on this unique bridge, please click this <http://www.sdrp.org/wordpress/portfolio/bikeped-bridge/>

After crossing the bridge, we headed south through Rancho Bernardo and 4S Ranch toward Rancho Penasquitos. We stopped again for water and snacks just before we got on

didn't ride all of it, the entire State Route 56 Bike Path spans 10.3 miles heading west from Carmel Mountain Ranch toward Del Mar. Our first of two flats during the ride occurred after we got on the SR 56 trail, so we regrouped again at that point.



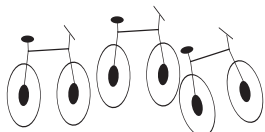
The State Route 56 Bike Path terminated near the northern-most base of the Torrey Pines State Reserve. After turning right on S. Camino Del Mar, we headed north toward Solana Beach on our way to our starting point in Oceanside. The picture below was taken as we were heading north near Torrey Pines. As we were riding through Carlsbad, a second flat happened. Unfortunately, two of our riders

could not repair the flat enough to continue their ride. When the flat happened the group was separated, so the lead group stopped to wait for the flat to be repaired by the trailing group.



In a great showing of friendship and compassion, the remaining cyclists that could still roll split up to ensure that the ride finished successfully. One of the able riders rode to Oceanside and drove his truck back to pick up the cyclists that could not continue. I did my part by going to [Craft Coast Beer and Tacos](#) in Oceanside to reserve a table for our post-ride meal. A short time later everyone was enjoying a cold drink and street tacos, reveling in a successful day riding around north San Diego County on our bikes.

You are invited to join us on one of our weekly Sunday South County rides and/or on our next Fifth Sunday of the Month Remote Ride on January 29, 2023. The route for our January ride is to be determined, so please contact me at [danignosci@cox.net](mailto:danignosci@cox.net) with any remote ride suggestions. As always, Sunday route information can be found at <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419754-sunday-rides>



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# *Cycling and Mindfulness*

*By Jim Polus*

They say mindfulness requires meditation, a cleansing of the mind, inaction, nothingness, focus on the inner self, your soul. I am a cyclist. I am searching for the intersection of cycling and mindfulness. It seems meditation and mindfulness require stillness, a calmness, a rejection of the outside self, a mind clear of noise and visual debris, complete inaction.

I enter the garage with purpose. I tell myself it is not really a bike; it is my vehicle to the moment, soon to be realized while floating along country roads, riding only with submerged instincts, my mind free of clutter. Like a monk deep in meditation, I slowly remove my bike from the garage. I ceremoniously mount the bike and start pedaling. I am on a journey to mindfulness. How will I know when I achieve mindfulness? Don't ask, don't speculate, you will know when everything is perfect for the moment.

The sky is cloudy, threatening; it will rain. Should it dissuade me? In the moment, it does not matter. The road is my friend. My body, the bike, and the road will soon blend into a oneness. Other cyclists move in and out of my peaceful space. Only a slight nod or a subtle gesture with my hand is warranted. Most just stare ahead.

A Pepsi truck passes too close, the swoosh of the vehicle sweeping by unnerves me. I reflect on the occasional crash, thoughts banished to an obscure part of my consciousness, lurking in a repressed state. Countless hours on the bike cultivate caution but not fear. You cannot ride a bike in fear.

The predicted rain gently falls. I refuse to acknowledge the wetness as rain. What does it matter if it is raining? My cycling glasses fog, watery streaks obscure my vision. I have

no tissues, my visibility impaired, the road ahead wet. The mind voice chastises me. I stop thinking about my glasses and push on. I have a good pace, my legs merge with their soulmates: the pedals, the cranks, the whole bike.

A quick glance catches the splendor of a Great Blue Heron. The mental images of its elongated neck, a long narrow orange bill, an oval body of bluish gray feathers, supported by two stick-like legs, linger as I ride on. But is gazing briefly on the Great Blue Heron disturbing my state of nothingness?

The rain is intensifying. I keep pedaling, trying not to think about the rain. I stop briefly to don my rain jacket and continue riding. With a furtive swivel to my right, I spot a sea of cattails, a mélange of green, brown, and yellowish colors. I imagine artful scenes from Monet, simple lily pads painted in his moment of solitude.

I spot a discarded beer as I speed by. One moment rewards with the elegant array of colors; replaced in another moment by the object of a mindless act.

I arrive at the base of a short, steep hill. I feel the urge to launch a solo attack up the climb, just me against the hill, against gravity. I climb at a rapid pace, like the most gifted competitor in the Tour De France, intensely focusing on the top, looming ahead. Halfway to the top, confidence is waning, thighs burning, heart pounding, lungs searing, demanding more air. I concede the moment to human will. I crest the hill in joy and exhaustion, the mind victorious, the body grateful for rest.

At a small Sunday afternoon wine party, caught in the random discussion of the moment, I make the mistake of casually referring to my morning ride of 50 miles. An elderly, spritely woman quizzically, even derisively asks “Why?”.

I fumble for an answer, relying on vague and worn references to heart disease. I sit quietly ruminating on her question. There is no opportunity to elaborate, as the discussion pivots to more mundane neighborhood matters like easements and land rights. I make no contribution to the discussion, still musing in my mind the answer to her “Why”.

I know the answer: cycling is joyful, fun, invigorating, full of wondrous sights such as swooping hawks, wild turkeys, slithering snakes, an occasional brown bear, and the waterfowl, especially the milky, snow-white spindly egrets. I love the marshlands bedecked in reeds and lily pads, garnished with white flowers content to bloom for only a few days. I find the ebb and flow of the tides mysterious, awesome, cutting deep ridges across malleable marshlands. The ocean waves remind me nothing is still, no moment the same.

I enjoy the solitude. I welcome fatigue. I want to feel every part of my body. I value my will to ride, to push myself, to discover limits and go beyond. I know I am alive! Mindfulness achieved.



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# HIKING CORNER

BY THERESA NELSON



## Below The Rim

### Down is Optional, but Up is Mandatory

Most non-flat hikes start with an uphill and finish back at the start downhill. This is not the case if you decide to hike into the Grand Canyon. The rim sits at 7,000 feet of elevation and the base of the Grand Canyon at Phantom Ranch is 2,460 feet.

Our family had hiked into the Grand Canyon together in June of 2006 over two days. At that time we hiked down the South Kaibab Trail. We spent the night at Phantom Ranch resort which included beds with linens, hot showers, a cooked and served dinner and breakfast. Then we hiked out the Bright Angel trail the next day. For this hike we only needed day-packs with our water and snacks for the hike. It was still a hard hike because of the climbing and the heat. Thankfully we had places along the way up the Bright Angel trail to refill with water.

I had always said I never want to backpack and sleep in a tent in the snow. I consider myself a three-season camper. I don't want to purchase

or store technical winter gear. However celebrating New Year's in the Grand Canyon was an adventure not to be missed. My oldest daughter, Jessika Nelson (Jessy) currently lives in Flagstaff, AZ and was able to snag sought-after back country permits to camp in the Canyon for New Year's weekend (2022-2023). Fellow OCW member, Mike Baumgartner and his oldest daughter, Morgan, joined Steve, Jessy and I for the trip.

We drove to the South Rim on Friday night, December 30th and camped in our vehicles in the snow at Mather Campground. During the winter one loop of Mather Campground is open for camping. This allowed us to start on the trail in the morning. We did walk to the rim but the cloud cover was so low you could not see into the canyon at all. There were a lot of families and tourists (schools were still on winter break) sadly that really couldn't see the view. The evening was cold (about 30 degrees) and the snow flurried all night long. We were able to have a fire in the fire ring at our campsite and grilled hamburgers for dinner and cooked a pre-hike breakfast of egg and cheese bagels to

set us off with good fuel.

The next morning still had very limited visibility at the edge of the rim. We started our hike into the mist hoping we would eventually travel below the cloud line and be rewarded with canyon views. The first mile and one half of the trail is very icy and required trekking poles and pull-on spikes on our boots to prevent slipping. This was especially important since on this trip we had fully loaded backpacks which included tents, sleeping systems, stoves and food for two days of meals. Knowing this would probably be a one-time winter hiking thing, I purchased inexpensive spikes, but quickly learned the difference between good spikes and cheap spikes. The positioning of the spikes on cheaper models allow for a “cookie-cutter” type of experience picking up snow globs with each step. Whereas the better models have a better shape to the spike system so you get a good bite of snow when moving forward without picking up snow. Since we only needed them for one and one half miles, I’m still not sure I would have wanted to invest more than \$50.



Sure enough, before we hit the first rest house at one and one half miles, we were below the cloud line and the morning multiple-colored

canyon came into view. Each switchback showed a deeper perspective. Since it was winter, there were much fewer hikers on the trail than summer would have. We met a few day hikers and some backcountry hikers. The next day’s forecast was supposed to be rain. We did meet one group of hikers on the way up while we were going down that had a second day camping permit, but decided to hike out before the rain. We were excited we would actually be spending the turn of the year in the canyon.

There is a second rest house at three miles. This helped break the hike up into sections. Going down constantly even with switchbacks can be hard on the knees and leg muscles. We spent a little time in the rest house refueling and taking advantage of the available composting toilets before continuing on our hike. We arrived at Havasupi Gardens (formerly Indian Gardens) campground in the late afternoon. During the winter the water is turned off at the rest houses but the campground has running water (unless the pipe broke from the freeze). We did bring a gravity-fed water filter just in case.

For this trip we elected to do freeze-dried or dehydrated meals that only needed boiling water to make them eatable. This allowed for less dishes, no pots and worked easily with the Jet Boil and Alpine MSR stove we brought. The campsites were a little damp from the previous rain storm and we did our best to find what we thought was the driest available site and set up our tents. We had a warm dinner and decided to celebrate midnight at 7:30 pm since quiet hours started at 8 pm. Morgan had carried down a

three-pound bottle of Veuve champagne that we popped open and cheered to the new year. You could hear other campers shout in awe

when the cork popped.

Steve, Jessy and I crawled into our Big Agnes 4-person tent and I got cozy in my borrowed 15 to -9 degree sleeping bag. One of the best things about winter camping is there are very few bugs. The campsites have a shelter structure with a picnic table and “critter” box to place our food and scented items, but there was very little animal activity at this time of year. We had places to hang our packs and it was suggested to open the zippers as the Ravens can get pretty curious and have been known to open zippers and steal shiny objects like car keys. The campground also has several composting toilets and a couple of water spigots to refill hydration bladders and bottles.



The next morning dawned beautiful and clear. There was 90% rain in the forecast and our original plan was to do a day hike to the river at the bottom of the canyon and back, but we decided to not tempt fate and start out with a hike to Plateau Point, then possibly a short bit on Tonto Trail West. Morgan was a below canyon virgin and since this was her first hike below the rim we wanted to be sure she got a

great vista point. I had some pack liners in my backpack from a previous trip, so we put our sleeping bags into them inside of our tents, just in case there was flooding before we got back. As long as the sleeping bags were dry we should be able to survive another night in the canyon. We put snacks and essentials in our day packs and trekked the short 1 ½-mile trail to the point. Going along on flat trail with a lighter pack was certainly easier than the previous day’s 4.6-mile downhill expedition.

We arrived at Plateau Point in a short amount of time and were rewarded with an amazing view of the river and canyon bottom. We enjoyed some time being inspired by nature and as we started to head back we felt rain drops on our heads and shoulders. We had each packed rain shells and I was happy to have my Black Diamond Goretex jacket for the trip back to camp. The air temperature was still in the high 40s and low 50s so and unless the wind picked up we were pretty comfortable. I had fleece-lined Eddie Bauer pants as well as a new Smart Wool base layer I had received as a Christmas present. Although the pants were not waterproof, the merino wool kept me warm even when wet. We passed by the Tonto Trail cutoff just as the rain was getting harder and everyone decided we needed to head back to camp.

When we returned to camp we realized the water flow was making puddles in our site and under our tents. We took our hiking poles and created divots to change the water flow. Most of the campers had abandoned their sites so we checked for other available sites that might be dryer. We were able to move our tent to a close-by site that had dry ground under a shelter where the picnic table had been moved. The onsite ranger had already given us permission to take over another site if available.

There was an old ranger cabin near the campground that served as a visitor center which had card games and books you could borrow while in camp. As the campground was now mostly abandoned (because of the weather), we spent a couple of hours in the visitor center to dry out from the rain and take advantage of



the bookshelf and took turns reading to each other Grand Canyon ghost stories and a few stories from the book, *Over the Edge, Death in the Grand Canyon* by Michael P Ghiglieri, Thomas M Myers and M.P. Ghilieri.

We headed back to our campsite for a warm dinner and set the alarm for an early morning wake-up call. It rained most of the night but we stayed warm and dry in our full-season tent and cozy sleeping bags (and my Smart Wool base layer). Six am still seemed early as my daughter nudged me awake. We had a quick breakfast, took down the tents, packed up our bags, got a last photo and started our ascent. Although it was a short 4.6 miles, the uphill, the switchbacks as well as the altitude made us realize we weren't really in as good of shape as we thought we were. We kept walking one foot in front of the other and the snow level was much lower than Saturday morning. The previous night's rain made for a muddy trail which eventually turned into snow and ice. Thankfully we were prepared with multiple

layers, merino wool and our spikes. Again the strategically placed rest houses helped break the trail up into sections. Finally just a couple more turns of the trail and we saw the Kolob studio which signified the end of the trail and we were at the rim.

Since Jessy moved to Flagstaff, I have visited the Grand Canyon more in the last year than I have my whole life. In May of 2021 we rode our bicycles from nearby Tusayan to the Canyon. Visiting is nice, however, traveling below the rim will always be a magical trip.

Photos by: Morgan Baumgartner, Mike Baumgartner, and Jessy Nelson.

If you are interested in doing a similar trip, here are some helpful links:

Backcountry hiking the Grand Canyon: <https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/backcountry.htm>

Backcountry permits: <https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/backcountry-permit.htm>

Death in the Grand Canyon Book: <https://a.co/d/9DeyMIy>  
Swimming the Grand Canyon (a cheap vacation that got a little out of hand): <https://a.co/d/7EVXYAX>

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